

An Interesting Old Publication.

[The Republic]

Review by Arthur Hollick.

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BOX III







## An Interesting Old Publication<sup>1</sup>

ARTHUR HOLLICK

Among recent donations to the library of the Association is a complete set of an old monthly magazine<sup>2</sup> which comprises four semiannual volumes, beginning January 1851, and terminating December 1852, when it ceased issue in its original form and became a weekly newspaper under the title *The New York Republic*. It was the organ of the Order of United Americans, which was instrumental in forming the American party in politics and in keeping alive the objects and aims of the Native American or Know-Nothing party.

There were evidently two chapters of the order on Staten Island, Pavonia, No. 32, at Rossville, and Huguenot, No. 42, at Port Richmond, as may be ascertained by consulting the directory of chapters. The former met on Saturdays, the latter on Fridays. Membership lists are not given; but in the list of officers, published in the issue of December 1851, the names of Jesse G. Oakley and Charles A. Dusenbury may be found in connection with Pavonia chapter, and Selden Pratt, Edward Jones, and Jacob Lane in connection with Huguenot chapter.

On page 191, volume I, April 1851, is the following note: "We had the pleasure of visiting Pavonia Chapter, at the little village of Rossville, Staten Island, for the purpose of installing officers at the March term. We found the Chapter in a most prosperous condition, and the brothers all devoted to our principles. With the aid of Huguenot Chapter, at Port Richmond. they will take good care of Richmond County."

In 1852 the officers of the chapters were J. G. Oakley for Pavonia and E. Jones, J. Lane, and J. Davis for Huguenot. The titles of the officers are not given.

<sup>1</sup> Presented at the meeting of the Association November 20, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> The | Republic | A | Monthly Magazine | of | American Literature | Politics & Art | Thos. R. Whitney, Editor | New York | 100 Nassau Street. This set was presented by Mrs. E. Blake. (See p. 109.)

Of immediate interest to the Association is a half column review of Durant's *Algology*, on page 88 of the issue of February 1851, of which unique work we are the fortunate possessors of a copy.<sup>3</sup> The reviewer comments on "the immense application required to produce such a work in perfection" and concludes that this "necessarily limits the edition to a very small number, most of which will, doubtless, be absorbed by the scientific institutions of the country."

At this period in our national life political and religious feelings were intense and the resulting discussions and controversies were exceedingly bitter. Every issue of the magazine contains something of this character, dealing with secession, slavery, the restriction or extension of suffrage, the "free soil" issue, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in political and school affairs, women's rights, spiritualism, etc., and anyone who may wish to obtain interesting sidelights on the events, the passions and the tendencies of those turbulent times can find them in abundance in both the magazine articles and the editorial columns.

In discussing New York City politics mention is made of "the Society of Saint Tammany, a society formed *originally*, upon principles similar to those of the Order of United Americans. The old Constitution of the Tammany Society forbade the admission of foreigners to its council fires. . . . Foreigners have not only entered the wigwam, but they have been made sachems, and presided over its councils. . . . There are strange faces in the Lodge and the brethren are scattered afar. The glory of the old wigwam is departed."

In the issue of March 1851, is an editorial on Free Schools from which the following is abstracted: "It is well known that, by a law of the Legislature of New York, the People of the State were called upon, at the last Election, to declare, through the ballot-box, whether or not they wished to continue the system of Free Education then existing . . . a triumphant majority of

<sup>3</sup> See A Quaint Old Work on Seaweeds, Proc. Staten Is. Assoc. 5: 85-91. Oct. 1914-May 1915.



some thirty thousand votes, told the Legislature that the school law *must not* be repealed, and the system of *education, free to all*, must be continued."

The pursuit of the almighty dollar was rebuked even in those days, but from a different angle than in recent times, viz.: "I tell you, while you are pursuing, catching, hoarding money, Jesuitism, *e.*, POPERY AND DESPOTISM, is filling your green fields, your valleys, your mountains, with its schools . . . and if ye pay not more attention to the education of your children, in the right place, and less to traffic, ye will spend your profits beneath a monarchy, and be led to the altar of forms and ceremonies of Romanism, by your offspring."

Economic conditions, and the relation between producer and consumer, were sources of concern for the future at that time as they are today. The teachings of Malthus and anxiety in regard to unrestricted immigration form the basis of more than one article, of which the following abstract is an example: "It is true that we have millions of unploughed acres—sufficient to make our country the garden and granary of the world; but if these acres are made to teem with human beings, most of whom must, of necessity, become consumers instead of producers, (because the ratio of productive land necessarily lessens with the increase of population,) it follows that, instead of feeding the world, we shall ourselves be dependent for sustenance on other nations. And to this condition it is possible to arrive in *eighty years*, unless, like the Chinese, we consent to feed on rats and filth. . . . Our population . . . is doubled every twenty years, whereas immigration has, for several years past, more than doubled *every five years*. The deleterious effects of this ceaseless avalanche of ignorance and superstition, upon our social and political existence, are already seriously felt . . .," etc.

The necessity for nonpartisanship in municipal affairs was urged, as in our campaigns of a couple of decades ago, by the Good Government and Citizens' Union parties. Under the caption A MUNICIPAL PARTY the editor says "this is something that

is greatly needed at the present time by the tax-burthened, rowdy-ruled citizens of this great but misgoverned city. By a *municipal* party, we mean one that will be independent of the political issues of the nation, and give its attention solely to the management of our own municipal affairs."

There is also vigorous denunciation of the aldermen and magistrates "who are given to the habit of releasing rowdies and rascals from the clutches of the police, because just now the electioneering campaign commences, and the huckstering politicians . . . are becoming exceedingly amiable towards that class of their constituency. A bully or two in a ward are as pearls above price at an election. . . ."

Evidently Sunday was not quite the day of recreation then that it is now, as may be seen from the following item: "DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH.—It appears that the Directors of the Long Island Railroad are making an effort to have their cars run on the Sabbath; in reply to which, the Brooklyn *Evening Star* makes the following appropriate remarks: 'In the progress of the age, nothing has been rendered clearer to the vision of the American people, than the fact that the observance of the Sabbath as a day of worship and repose is the greatest of their privileges . . . we believe that nine tenths of the community are favorable to the entire avoidance of all business and the suspension of travel on Sunday. . . .'"

Certain of women's fashions in dress also come in for condemnation and satirical comment, as follows: "The ladies of the Commercial Metropolis, despairing of ever getting clean streets, through the medium of corporation brooms, have taken the matter into their own hands. The sidewalks and crossings, instead of being swept by the *sans cullottes* offspring of poverty, are now cleansed by the fashionable ladies, who carry home, under their long skirts the street gatherings of their promenades." Germs and bacteria were apparently unknown, although they were undoubtedly present in even greater numbers than in these days of clean streets and short skirts.



The editor, however, evidently believed in preventive medicinal treatment, inasmuch as we find under the BUSINESS NOTICES a reading advertisement which boosts "A Good Tonic" in these words: "'Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake' is a scriptural maxim. . . . With due deference to the old maxim, however, Dr. Thomas Blake recommends for the same purpose a little of his 'Aromatic Bitters,' of which there is no fear of taking too much. We are but one of many thousands who can testify to its excellent tonic qualities."

Some of the articles on the, at that time, beginning of woman's struggle for recognition as a responsible human being, are somewhat similar to recent editorials in the New York Times, or to expressions of opinion from Elihu Root and Everett P. Wheeler, and are equally amusing. Under the caption WOMAN, for example, may be found the following:

"Our theme is *Woman*, and a beautiful and glorious one it is.

"What a brilliant subject for contemplation! Woman! created by an All-wise Ruler of the Universe, as the companion of man. . . . And if it has not been so ordained that she can take part in national affairs, or that *her voice* can be heard in the halls of legislation, she nevertheless exercises a controlling influence, in cementing in indissoluble bonds our common country; for her motto is—

'United we stand—  
Divided we fall'

. . . .

Much has been said about 'Woman's Rights.' Without a wish to make a *noise* as to what constitutes these 'rights,' we will endeavor to point out a few of them. If married she has the 'right' to dandle her little ones on her knee, or sing them to their rosy slumber. . . . It is her 'right' to repair to the hovel of woe, seek out the wants of the destitute, and spread bread on the empty tables of the famishing, etc., etc. . . .

"Woman! for thy convenience and comfort there was launched at the creation of the world, from the workshop of the greatest

Architect ever known, an elegant ship for thee to sail in on the boisterous sea of life. 'Tis the ship Matrimony; and when *well man'd* and laden with *perfect love*, cannot fail to make a safe and prosperous voyage, etc., etc."

Under "CHIT-CHAT WITH READERS" the editor discourses as follows on the same subject: "Just now we wish to have a cozy and familiar chat with the ladies. What do you think of the new-fangled notions about 'Women's Rights'? . . . Do you believe you would be happier, or the instruments of greater happiness to others, if you should abandon the scenes of home that you make blessed, and adopt the career of men? . . . Men sometimes get queer notions, and among others they entertain the idea that the great God of Nature adapted the sexes to different employments. . . . Perhaps they are mistaken. Ladies will you give an opinion?"

Apparently no opinions were offered for publication; but subsequently, in the issue of October, 1852, the editor speaks his mind in no uncertain terms, viz., "The 'STRONG MINDED WOMEN' have been holding a convention recently at Syracuse, for the purpose of adopting measures to assert their 'rights' and the rights of their sex. . . . What a pity it is that every woman will not think as they do on the subject! . . . We think that man and woman should be assigned to duty on this terrestrial sphere according to their several qualifications and temperaments, etc., etc."

Weather conditions are also occasionally commented upon and we learn that "on Sunday morning, April 20th [1851], the New Yorkers were called to breakfast in the midst of a thoroughbred snowstorm."

In "A CHAPTER OF BEARDS" we are told that "beards are becoming more fashionable every day among us of modern times, and though the various and fantastic styles which our young blades adopt in their facial hirsute appendages may not yet be in accord with the old fashioned taste which lingers among us, we have no doubt another generation will be perfectly orthodox in regard to these time-honored ornaments of manhood."



In connection with airships the editor remarks: "We perceive that Mr. Rufus Porter has not yet abandoned the project . . . of building a machine for navigating the air against the wind. . . . We are not among those who deny the possibility of practical aërial navigation. . . ."

The great theatrical star at that time was Jenny Lind, and while her popularity did not, apparently, result in having a brand of cigars named after her, the editor notes "all manner of goods and chattels bearing the name of the Nightingale. We have Jenny Lind hats, umbrellas, shoes, cabbages, apples and chestnuts; but the last article that we have seen, laying claim to this popular *soubriquet*, was a Jenny Lind Ash-box."

Incidentally it is interesting to imagine what our modern Japanese residents would think of the following item of foreign news: "The recent movements for sending a fleet to this outlandish empire [Japan], with sealed orders, has raised quite a din among the politicians."

In the issue of June, 1851, there is an account of the great fire in New York on December 16, 1835, with a full-page engraving, which are of interest in connection with the two framed pictures of the conflagration on display in our Museum.

The editor scores the city on having no public library and says "it is true, that in the south wing of the City Hall is a corner dignified with the cognomen of 'the library room.' . . . there is no library there; but in its stead, a beggarly array of dusty cases, into which are *thrown* . . . a few odd volumes of proceedings of the Boards of Aldermen and Assistants, a law book or two, and a large concrete of dust. . . ."

"P. S.—Since the above was written we perceive that the Board of Aldermen have passed a resolution authorizing the Clerk of the Common Council to employ a librarian at a salary *not exceeding \$250 per annum!*"















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